

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
COMMISSION ON MILITARY
AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington St., Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789**

November 2005

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Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs

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Legislative Services Agency Staff

**Al Gossard, Fiscal Analyst
Dan Paliganoff, Attorney**

November 1, 2005

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Commission can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

ANNUAL REPORT

Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs

I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE

The Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation (IC 2-5-20) directing the Commission to study the following:

- (1) Matters relating to veterans and veterans' affairs.
- (2) Matters relating to the active and reserve members of the armed forces of the United States.

The Commission may also study other topics as directed by the Commission's chairman.

No additional topics were assigned by the Legislative Council.

The Commission is to annually report the results of the Commission's study to the General Assembly before November 1.

The Commission consists of 12 members: 4 Representatives; 4 Senators; and 4 lay members. The chairman of the Legislative Council appoints the chairman of the Commission.

II. INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY

The Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs met to carry out its responsibilities under IC 2-5-20.

III. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

The Commission met one time on Thursday, October 20, 2005, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 233 of the State House.

The Commission heard a presentation from Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Adjutant General for Indiana, regarding activities of the Indiana National Guard. Major General Umbarger discussed troop participation in overseas conflicts, provision of domestic emergency support, and involvement in homeland security issues

The Commission also heard a presentation from Brigadier General Omer Clifton Tooley, Joint Forces Deputy Commander for the Indiana Army National Guard, regarding Camp Atterbury and the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center.

The Commission also heard recommendations and suggestions from members, received public testimony, and approved the annual report.

IV. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Adjutant General for Indiana, provided a slide presentation on the activities of the Indiana National Guard. Major General Umbarger discussed the state and federal missions of the National Guard and provided information on troop and employment levels. He stated that there are approximately 13,000 traditional soldiers and airmen along with various full-time personnel (approximately 943 active guard reserve, 1,520 federal uniformed employees, 405 state employees, and 39 contract employees). The annual payroll of the Indiana National Guard exceeds \$175.5 million (100% federal money), and there is nearly \$1 billion in infrastructure value in the state.

Major General Umbarger provided information on Indiana locations of National Guard units, Joint Forces deployments since 9/11, Camp Atterbury's role in troop mobilization, various family support programs offered to troops, as well as Indiana's relationship to other states in terms of troop strength.

Major General Umbarger also provided details on Indiana's role in the disaster relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Brigadier General Omer Clifton Tooley, Joint Forces Deputy Commander for the Indiana Army National Guard, provided additional details on Camp Atterbury and the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (UTC). Muscatatuck UTC occupies the former grounds of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center.

Brigadier General Tooley described the dual missions of the National Guard: (1) "Win the Peace" and (2) "Defend the Homeland." He also described the future challenges associated with these missions and the various forms those challenges may take. The future operating environment will likely be in an urban area since an estimated 75% of the population may reside in large urban areas by 2010. He also described the various tasks and training scenarios associated with each of the missions, especially as they relate to the two training facilities. He added that, where other training sites can train at the platoon level, these facilities can train at the battalion and brigade level.

The Muscatatuck UTC was described as consisting of over 1,000 acres, including a 250-acre main campus and a 180-acre reservoir. The facility includes 68 buildings with 851,000 square feet under roof and 9 miles of roads. The former grounds of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center was turned over by the state, with Purdue University receiving the northern and southern parts of the property and the National Guard receiving the middle part.

Major General Umbarger also described the relationship of the training facilities with the surrounding communities, as well as some of the research coming out of Purdue University.

Brigadier General Tooley also described the significant change in economic impact associated with Camp Atterbury. Before 9/11, the operating budget of Camp Atterbury was \$5.1 million with salaries of \$1.5 million. Currently, the operating budget has increased to \$21 million with salaries of \$22 million. He added that Camp Atterbury has been elevated to Tier 1 in terms of

federal priority for future development and funding.

Major General Umbarger and Brigadier General Tooley also presented a short video on the Indiana National Guard.

Colonel Joe Ryan, U.S. Army (Ret.), member of the Commission, provided a set of six items for consideration by the Commission.

Item #1 - Establishment of a Veterans Affairs Trust - Colonel Ryan stated that he would like to see Indiana establish a Veterans Affairs Trust, similar to the one established in Wisconsin. According to testimony, the Wisconsin Veterans Trust provides an extensive array of veterans programs, benefits, and services, including education, emergency grants, small business loans, and job training and retention programs. Colonel Ryan suggested that funding could consist of revenue from the sale of veterans license plates, a veterans trust check-off on state individual income tax return refunds (similar to the existing DNR check-off), individual and corporate contributions, investment income, or appropriations from the General Assembly.

Item #2 - Exempt Military Retirement Income from Indiana's Individual Income Tax - Colonel Ryan suggested exempting military retirement income from the state income tax. He added that according to the U.S. Department of Defense, 22,245 Indiana military retirees received \$332.8 million in military retiree pay during FY 2004. In addition, there is an estimated \$20 million in nontaxable U.S. Veterans Administration disability payments.

Item #3 - Award of High School Diplomas to Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars - Colonel Ryan explained that many veterans left high school prior to graduating to join the military during the Korean and Vietnam wars. He added that those veterans with honorable discharges are deserving of a high school diploma.

Item #4 - Compensation for Indiana Medal of Honor Awardees for Certain Events - Colonel Ryan suggested that the state should provide compensation (e.g., travel, per diem, and lodging) for Indiana Congressional Medal of Honor awardees who participate in patriotic and other official events. The state compensation would be limited to events where the veteran is not otherwise compensated. He added that this proposal should not have much fiscal impact, perhaps around \$200 per event or a few thousand dollars per year.

Item #5 - Renaming Part of the Indianapolis International Airport after H. Weir Cook - Colonel Ryan suggested that the Commission should draft a resolution urging the Indianapolis Airport Authority to name part of the Indianapolis International Airport complex in honor of H. Weir Cook, a Hoosier World War I and World War II pilot and aviation pioneer.

Item #6 - Increase the Death Benefit to \$150,000 - Colonel Ryan suggested that the death benefit to families of Indiana service members who are killed in the armed conflict in Iraq be increased to \$150,000. He added that there have been 51 or 52 Indiana deaths from the Iraqi conflict.

No action was taken on these items.

John Dahman, member of the Commission, raised the issue that the USO at the Indianapolis International Airport is very short on space. He indicated that the USO provides services (e.g., food, TV use, etc.) to many service personnel while they are visitors to the airport. He stated

that he would like to see the Indianapolis International Airport work with the USO in improving the situation.

Sen. Wyss suggested that this be a statement directed to the Mayor of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Airport Authority and stated in the Commission's annual report. This was properly moved and seconded and approved by consent of the members.

Donald Myers, USMC (Ret.), Indianapolis, stated his support of the High School Diploma issue raised by Colonel Ryan.

V. COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission made the following findings of fact:

- (1) The USO at the Indianapolis International Airport is very short on space.
- (2) The USO provides many services to service personnel from Indiana and other states while they are visitors to the airport.

The Commission made the following recommendation:

The Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs urges the Mayor of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Airport Authority to ensure that the USO has an amount of operational space at the Indianapolis International Airport that is appropriate for the USO's requirements and the importance of its mission.

Adoption of Annual Report: It was properly moved and seconded that the draft annual report, after being updated for the October 20 meeting, be approved. With eight members present, the motion passed with a voice vote and with no members voting against.

WITNESS LIST

Donald Myers, USMC (Ret.), Indianapolis

Brigadier General Omer Clifton Tooley, Joint Forces Deputy Commander for the Indiana Army
National Guard

Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Adjutant General for Indiana